



# Export Express

Insights to Accelerate International Expansion



Our Mission: Help Manufacturers “Spend time **Selling** to Distributors versus **Searching** for Distributors”

## Database covers 2,845 Retailers

Export Solutions retailer database now reaches 96 countries. Our point of difference is coverage of an average of 25 customers per country, not just the 4 or 5 everyone already knows. Features include one click access to retailers’ web shops for online price checks and weekly special offer fliers. Examples: UAE coverage extends to 35 retailers, 126 in Canada, 58 in the UK, and 47 retailers in Australia. For free sample access and subscription information, please visit [www.exportsolutions.com](http://www.exportsolutions.com).

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## Welcome Back



International teams functioned in survival mode for the last three years. Most remained anchored to the home office solving supply shortages and executing price increases via impersonal Teams meetings. A fresh approach is required as the survival strategies of 2019-2022 do not serve as an acceleration platform moving forward. 2023 signals the time to shift from “maintain to gain” by getting on the plane. Export Solutions shares our ten tactics for a warm welcome back.

### Strategy Renewal

A new Lessons Learned exercise is critical at this pivot point. New consumer habits and retail prices may cause us to shuffle our country

prioritization ranking. Countries and distributors that were leaders prior to the pandemic may be categorized as laggards now. Resource allocation between mature and emerging markets must be calibrated. Digital strategies are for today, not the future.

### FaceTime

How can you build a relationship and a partnership with an international distributor without seeing each other? It’s tough to conceive a new brand strategy if you have not been in the same room for three years! A major theme for 2023 is to reconnect with your distributor teams in their home markets.

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## Real FaceTime

International development evolved into a business management process defined by a packed calendar of Teams and Zoom meetings. Export managers adjusted to lower tier frequent flier status and the short commute from your bedroom office to a home cooked dinner. Surviving the Covid era deserves a badge of honor. However, it's a mistake to adapt remote-based export as the New Normal strategy.



Intimacy is a requirement to thrive in 2023. I remind my clients that some of the best deals are closed after 9:00 pm. There are few bonding activities in business more important than a lively dinner at a nice restaurant with a distributor or customer. In the last few months, I have resumed globe-trotting with a buoyant outcome. Distributor dinners are celebrations, the resumption of treasured relationships. Distributor conferences resemble a loud family reunion with everyone genuinely happy to see each other after a gap.

Looking to rekindle your international relationships? Here are five strategies to reignite the flame of distributor passion for your company.

### 1. Distributor Visits to All Core Countries

Revert to the trusted practice of "showing up." Conduct store visits with the sales team and dinner with the distributor CEO. Walk around the distributor office and warehouse, handing out small gifts with your company logo. Shaking hands and "kissing babies" is all part of the job of securing distributor focus on your priorities.

### 2. Regional Distributor Meetings

Distributors love these events in first-class locations. For the brand owner, it's an efficient tactic to secure the undivided attention of your sales team for two to three days. The key is a mix of distributor sharing of case studies mixed with fun social events. Everyone loves to win awards. Make new memories!

### 3. Form a Distributor Advisory Council

It is an honor to serve on a distributor advisory council. Linking top distributors with exposure to your senior management team creates a special bond between the two companies. Members of your advisory council always achieve their sales objectives.

### 4. Training

Many companies have invested in new brand portals, digital marketing content, and product innovation. Conduct a training session as part of a distributor group meeting to increase your visibility. Make the training fun and you will win their loyalty.

### 5. Connect With Every Distributor CEO

A first quarter must is to speak with every distributor CEO. Inquire about their outlook for the year and planned investments and changes. Use the opportunity to reinforce your priorities for the year and to confirm your visit dates.

Many export managers will remain glued to their desks and show up only for the global trade fairs and still perform adequately. Leaders will return to the road for REAL FaceTime with core stakeholders. This engagement will allow us to experience the warmth of our relationships and distinguish between Zoom promises and retail reality.

Good luck!

**Greg Seminara**  
[greg@exportsolutions.com](mailto:greg@exportsolutions.com)

## Strategic Services

Contact Us for  
*Export Solutions*

1. Identify Best in Class Distributors: 96 Countries
2. Best Practices Export Strategy
3. Distributor Management Workshops
4. Export 101: Let's Get Started
5. New Market Prioritization and Launch Plan
6. Personal Distributor Introductions: 96 Countries
7. Walmart International
8. Distributor Contracts, Margins, and Fees
9. Meeting Speaker
10. International Strategy Expert

# Introducing



## America's Favorite Brands

19 Companies | 200+ Top Brands | \$85 Billion Combined

### Executive Board

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**Connect | Learn | Share | Grow**

View our activities for export managers – [www.usafoodexport.com](http://www.usafoodexport.com)

## Why Distributors?

Distributors offer an integrated, local solution versus selling direct to customers via an offshore subsidiary. Export Solutions database covers 9,400 distributors, an average of 87 per country, validating their essential role in every country.

	Distributor	Subsidiary
Cost	Variable cost model	Fixed Cost Model
Critical Mass	Scale = Revenue	Costly for one company
Local	"Native" presence	Short-term expats?
Entrepreneurship	Owners	Employees
Focus	Serves multiple brands	Dedicated
Geographic Coverage	National	Major cities only
Customer Relationships	Long standing, cross functional	Frequent turnover
Omni Channel	All channel opportunities	Costly for one company
Specialization	Local category experts	Global category experts
Compliance	Masters local laws/practices	Requires outside counsel
Complexity	Handles through scale	Costly to manage
Category Habits	"Lives" local habits	Research-based understanding
Continuity	Dedicated to one country	Dedicated to "home" country
Marketing	Local activation	Global activation
Retail Servicing	Invests in core service	Frequently outsourced
Results	Delivers annual results. Long-term focus.	Delivers annual results. Short-term focus.

### Create Your Own Export Library



*Distributor Search Guide*



*Export Scorecard Guide*



*Export Strategy Guide*



*New Distributor Cooperation  
Model Guide*



*Selling to USA Handbook*

*"From First Meeting to First Order"*



All guides available free at [www.exportsolutions.com](http://www.exportsolutions.com) in the *Export Tips* section.

# Can We Help You?

## Distributor Search Helper for:



Your  
Logo  
Here



Procter & Gamble



Johnson & Johnson



## Recent Distributor Search Projects

Asia	Europe	Middle East	Latin America
Australia	Germany	Israel	Argentina
China	Ireland	Kuwait	Brazil
Indonesia	Netherlands	Qatar	Colombia
Japan	Nordics	Saudi Arabia	Costa Rica
Malaysia	Spain	UAE	Ecuador
Philippines	United Kingdom	North America	Mexico
Singapore	Africa	Canada	Panama
South Korea	South Africa	United States	Peru



**Export Solutions**  
Distributor Identification Experts

**Call the Export Accelerator!**

Contact Greg Seminara at [greg@exportsolutions.com](mailto:greg@exportsolutions.com)  
to discuss your business development project.

[www.exportsolutions.com](http://www.exportsolutions.com)

## Road Map to the World

What is the profile of your best performing export countries? Most companies sell to a mix of markets from neighboring countries to places with high GDP or category development. An essential task is to segment countries by type and allocate resources according to the size of the prize. What is your export sales split by market type today? Future?

Type	Description	Examples
Neighbor	Adjacent country with similar lifestyle habits.	USA & Canada Germany & Austria
Homesick	International destinations for your countries' expats.	Australia: UK & Italian brands Brasil: Portugal & Japan
Island	Island countries dependent on overseas suppliers.	Caribbean, Malta, Iceland, Cyprus
Customer	Follow Global Partner to overseas countries.	Walmart, Amazon, Costco, Carrefour, Ahold, Metro
Continent	Region where your brand enjoys visibility and scale.	South America, Middle East, Eastern Europe, SE Asia
E-Commerce	Universal platform. Unlimited assortment in cyber space.	Coupang: S Korea Mercado Libre: Latam
Category Champion	Countries with high category development.	Tea: UK & Ireland Cereal: Mexico
Money Markets	Countries with high GDP and per capita spending.	USA, Western Europe, Saudi Arabia, Singapore
Big Bets-Many Mouths	Large population countries requiring strategic investment.	USA, China, India, Indonesia, Brasil, Mexico
Opportunistic	Trading. Sell at net price. Avoid diverting.	Anywhere. Ship to destination.

## Welcome Back

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### E-Commerce Excellence

E-commerce has reached critical mass in many countries. It is crystal clear that this powerful channel will only become more significant. In Asian countries like China and South Korea, e-commerce is rapidly becoming the primary outlet for imported brands. Create an e-commerce business plan for each country with activities, budget, and monthly reporting metrics. Treat Amazon as a global customer like Carrefour or Walmart. Share best practices from your corporate headquarters.

### Big Bet

There is a difference between strategic brand building and tactical exports. All companies should identify one “Big Bet” country with a significant size of the prize. Attractive targets include highly populated countries, with healthy category development. Exporters must “walk the talk” in a challenging big bet country by investing in brand marketing activities, local manager, and product innovations aligned with consumer habits.

### Asia Rebound

Asia emerged from lockdown in late 2022, at least one year behind other regions. Drivers such as young populations and new middle class have resumed their upward trajectory. Southeast Asian countries like Vietnam, Thailand, and the Philippines are future stars. Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan are rich countries with large stores and good potential, especially for USA companies.

### Distributor Change

Many distributors thrived during the pandemic, benefitting from the shift to meals prepared at home. Others suffered, as core channels and gourmet-priced brands lost relevancy. Distributor change is a last resort, but every team has at least one partner that is a chronic under performer and not a good fit for the future. Begin today, as the transition period to a new distributor may require one year to implement.

2023 Winning Strategies	
<b>Geographic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Big Bet: Choose Focus Country</b></li> <li>• <b>Accelerate USA Development for Overseas Brands</b></li> <li>• <b>Asia Rebound: Vietnam, Thailand, Philippines</b></li> <li>• <b>Saudi Arabia &amp; the Gulf</b></li> </ul>
<b>Sales Execution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>E-Commerce KPIs</b></li> <li>• <b>In-Store Visibility: Is This Store a 10?</b></li> <li>• <b>Listing Maps – Every Country</b></li> </ul>
<b>Team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Reconnect: Increase Market Visits</b></li> <li>• <b>Upgrade Underperforming Distributors</b></li> <li>• <b>People Power: Shift Resources to New Business Development</b></li> </ul>

### Is the Store a 10?

The supermarket is a product showroom where export dreams are translated to financial reality. How do you determine a good store presence for your brand versus a bad one? Each member of your distributor sales force should maintain a clear understanding of your in-store placement and off-shelf merchandising objectives. Export Solutions has designed a program called Is the Store a 10? to allow all the capability to evaluate store conditions for any brand based upon a simple 1 to 10 scoring system.

### Beyond the Brand Promotions

Exporters repeat the same boring price discount trade promotions year after year. The world has changed, with supermarkets looking for unique special offers tailored to their customers, not the general market. Challenge your distributors to create fresh promotional offerings around meal solutions, country of origin, or a retailer’s favorite charity. Try something new!

### Selling to the USA

All international brands claim sales to the USA, but struggle to gain scale in this attractive country of 335 million people. Our retailer database tracks 418 USA customers, all looking for unique new food items. The path forward requires that overseas brands play by USA rules with brokers’ slotting fees supported by a USA-based country manager.

### People Power

Human resource allocation may equal marketing investment as a tool to drive export development. “Distributors respect what the brand owners inspect.” Consider strategies such as appointing a manager dedicated to launching new markets or global e-commerce. Hire people in growth hubs like Bangkok, Jeddah, or Mexico City versus expensive expatriate destinations such as Singapore. Increased headquarter-based supply-chain support is critical as managers return to the road.

### Can We Help You?

Why do companies use Export Solutions consulting services? Export Solutions serves as a “hands on” accelerator, quickly helping companies find distributor solutions worldwide. We are able to help, through the world’s leading global distributor rolodex, with relationships created through 300+ projects on five continents.

Export Solutions maintains a single-minded focus on the distributor search process “from first meeting to first order.” Recent projects ranged from Thailand and Taiwan to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Europe and the Americas represent core areas too, with projects in Italy and the UK as well as Argentina, Peru and, of course, the USA and Canada. Consider subscribing to our popular database covering 9,400 category specific distributors and 2,845 retailers in 96 countries.

## Ten Tips: Ex-Selling at E-Commerce

E-commerce now accounts for five percent of USA omnichannel sales, up 40% in the last year according to Nielsen. This includes almost \$12 billion sold through online grocers. No one can accurately gauge how big e-commerce will become, but it is safe to predict that it will be much, much bigger in the next five years. Billion-dollar multinationals and scrappy start-ups are attacking this channel with vigor, widening the performance gap versus successful national brands. In China and India, e-commerce accounts for a majority of the sales for many imported products. Read Export Solutions' ten tips for capturing your fair share of the growth in this strategic channel.

### 1. Conduct E-Commerce Survey for Core Countries

Create a one-page template capturing local e-commerce customers, online grocery trends and current distributor engagement. Calibrate where each country is on a development curve. Source best practices from distributors in China, India, United Kingdom, and the USA where e-commerce maintains highest acceptance levels.

### 2. Speak to Millennials

Spend time with young people, learning how they shop and blaze through digital marketing messages. Learn why millennials avoid "their mothers brands" and how many rarely make a "stock-up shop" at a neighborhood supermarket. Another revelation is the trust they place in online reviews and key influencer recommendations.

### 3. Create a Global E-Commerce Strategy

Align with your company's overall e-commerce strategy. Establish benchmarks and toolkits to share with your distributors. Acknowledge the fast pace of development, allowing flexibility to pivot fast.

### 4. Distributors: E-Commerce Business Plan

Request each distributor create a 2023 e-commerce business plan. Include new distribution targets, marketing plans, and shipment objectives for e-commerce customers. Challenge distributors to hire a young person to serve as a dedicated e-commerce key account manager. Review each distributor's e-commerce marketing plan early and often in 2023. "A distributor respects, what the brand owner inspects."

### 5. Learn Online Marketing Tactics

Goodbye end caps and slotting allowances. Hello "pay per click" and first-page search results. Unlimited shelf space exists in cyberspace, with room for every SKU that you (and your competitors) produce. Face-to-face buyer meetings are replaced by online marketing menu programs and transparent sales ranking information. Learn the new rules or you will fail the e-commerce test.

### 6. Treat Amazon and Alibaba as Global Customers

Amazon revenue will exceed \$500 billion in 2023, including more than \$400 billion sourced from sales of goods. Amazon will comfortably rank as the world's number two retailer, far exceeding sales by Carrefour or Costco. Multinational category leaders have established customer teams to service Amazon. Many place their best, young talent against this high growth customer. Multifunctional team roles may share the same titles



in Finance, Supply Chain and Marketing, but the "work" is much different. What dedicated resources are assigned to Amazon and Alibaba today at your company?

### 7. Consider a Web Shop

Direct to consumer represented a complex route to market in the past. Today, new brands and leading companies are jumping at the opportunity to showcase their innovation and share in-depth product knowledge through their own proprietary web shop. Outsourced supply chain experts exist to provide fulfillment solutions. Tangible profits may be elusive today, but there is valuable, inexpensive learning to be gained from pioneering in this area.

### 8. Hire an International E-Commerce Expert

Appear as a preferred supplier to your distributors by providing leadership insights into this new trade channel. Distributors in emerging markets are hungry for best practices in establishing e-commerce brand building models. Send your e-commerce expert to core markets to conduct workshop training sessions. Your investment in an e-commerce strategy and guru positions your company as a preferred partner helping to build the distributor's entire business.

### 9. Appoint E-Commerce Distributors – Asia

Selling through the e-commerce channel requires different routes to market capabilities and skill sets than marketing through brick-and-mortar supermarkets. Consider appointing a separate e-commerce distributor in advanced countries like China and South Korea. A key issue is managing pricing equilibrium between your conventional distributor and e-commerce partner.

### 10. Track E-Commerce Results

Establish KPIs and measure performance at key customers such as Amazon. Are you getting your fair share of the growth?

E-commerce development is a top 2023 priority for every brand and distributor. Some may say that e-commerce is evolving slowly in their country or too complex and unprofitable to allocate resources. These are the same people whose parents were probably in the horse-and-buggy or fax businesses. Enhanced focus on e-commerce will position you as a leader (or survivor) for 2025.

## *418 USA Customers* How many are you selling to?



### *Export Solutions Retail Database Covers 418 Customers*

284 Supermarket Chains

31 Natural Foods

46 Convenience Chains

28 Wholesalers

### **Features**

- ✓ Up-to-date store counts
- ✓ Direct link to retailers' web sites
- ✓ Financial information for publicly traded retailers
- ✓ 126 Canadian retailers plus 2,300 retailers in 94 other countries
- ✓ Free sample access

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## Ten Tips: Getting a Distributor to Love Your Brand

The classic industry question is: "How do you maintain distributor focus on your company's priorities once you leave the market?" There is no easy answer, but a solution is to encourage a distributor to "fall in love" with your brand and company. Falling in love is based upon an attraction to a person and enjoyment of spending time with them. The same feelings can apply to a brand. I regularly witness super-human efforts by distributors for small- and medium-sized brands just because of "Brand Love." Listed below are Ten Tips to romance your distributors to superior results.

### 1. Master Chef Endorsement

The first step is convince the distributor team to be passionate consumers of your product and enthusiastic brand ambassadors. For food products, invite all of the group to lunch at a popular local restaurant. Pay a well-known chef to prepare a meal featuring your products. Or cook lunch for them yourself. For candy and snack brands, provide samples to share with the distributor's children's sports clubs. Provide frequent and generous samples to all of the distributor team.

### 2. Fun Sales Meetings

Every distributor has sales meetings for their entire company. These are usually a repetitive drone of Powerpoint slides. Why not hire an agency to create a fun presentation module which may include audience participation, games, or costumes? Or sponsor a local motivational speaker or training workshop using your products as the case studies. Break the mold of boring meetings!

### 3. Provide Great Customer Service

Respond to requests quickly. Ship complete containers to keep the pipeline filled. Pay all bill-backs promptly.

### 4. Distributor Awards

Recognize your high performing distributors with an award. This could be Distributor of the Year or for \$1 million in sales or for 15 years of partnership. Some companies sponsor smaller awards for key account manager of the year in each market and retail representative of the year. Publicize the event by awarding a plaque, hold an awards luncheon, take photos and share a press release of the celebration.

### 5. VIP Visit to Corporate Headquarters

Treat your distributors as VIPs at your corporate office. This trip creates a memorable bonding experience and a chance for you to serve as a good host. Take the distributor to a product development lab and organize a meal with your CEO or executive officers. Make him feel like part of the family.

### 6. Support Local Events and Charities

Creative distributors drive incremental sales through local marketing events. Display a willingness to support their ideas and invest in new programs. Events that sync with the distributors (or retailers) special charity build substantial goodwill and appreciation.



### 7. Annual Incentive Trip

Many companies sponsor trips for distributor executives who attain their annual sales quota. Mid-size brands source added focus by sharing the benefits of a good year by inviting achievers (and spouses?) to trips in resort locations like Hawaii or international cities such as Rome. Everyone works hard to qualify and vow to return "year after year."

### 8. Holiday Baskets

Send baskets or gift packs to distributor employees that include your product and other adjacent holiday items. The idea is to extend your brand's relationship to your partner's homes.

### 9. Distributor Advisory Council

Form a small elite group of distributors to advise your company on international development. Meet twice a year with access to your company's senior management. All members of the Distributor Advisory Council will meet their sales target.

### 10. Treat Distributors as Your Best Customers

Be nice. Say "thank you" frequently. Send handwritten notes to people to recognize a nice display or a fixed problem. Have fun while you work.

Distributors may work with twenty brands or more, each shouting for attention. Distributors support all their brands, but there is no magic science to allocate time equally. Naturally, we all spend more time and effort for the brands and people we like. What can you do to make your distributors "Fall in Love?"

Need more information? Visit [www.exportsolutions.com](http://www.exportsolutions.com).

## Export Manager Report Card

Assessment Criteria	Considerations	Rating: (10 = Best)
Annual Plan Development, Execution, Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aligned, reliable, committed</li> </ul>	
Export Experience – Food/Consumer Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New to 20 years +</li> </ul>	
Ability to Influence Distributors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on your priorities</li> </ul>	
Pioneers New Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From concept to containers</li> </ul>	
Work Ethic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office time vs. overseas trips?</li> </ul>	
International Citizenship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language skills, cultural alignment</li> </ul>	
Category Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Viewed as expert: buyers, distributors</li> </ul>	
Business Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partners with internal functions</li> </ul>	
Distributor Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From sales reps. to owner</li> </ul>	
Thought Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates and shares best practices</li> </ul>	
Export Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Logical vision and road map</li> </ul>	
Profitable, Sustainable Exports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sells profitable cases</li> </ul>	
Retail Store Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brand presence vs. market share?</li> </ul>	
Brand Building – Promotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creativity, effectiveness, efficiency</li> </ul>	
Problem Solving – Response Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same day to one week?</li> </ul>	
Customer Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior access at top retailers</li> </ul>	
Analytical Skills: Shipments, Nielsen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trends, opportunities, plan</li> </ul>	
Digital Savvy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E-commerce, social media</li> </ul>	
Supply Chain Management & Forecasting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accuracy and efficiency</li> </ul>	
Results vs Budget, Market, Category (CY, PY, 3 Years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flat to 10% +</li> </ul>	

# Searching for Distributors?

*Export Solutions Distributor Database Covers 96 Countries*

**Asia**  
2,038 Distributors  
17 Countries

**Latin America**  
1,593 Distributors  
29 Countries

**Europe**  
3,161 Distributors  
34 Countries



## *Middle East Database Coverage, by Distributor Specialty*

	Saudi Arabia	Egypt	Qatar	Kuwait
International Food	81	38	42	61
Beverage	18	11	15	22
Sweets & Snacks	29	20	15	33
Italian Food	22	8	13	16
Total Distributors	116	61	74	93

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